



For Immediate Release, October 21, 2013

‘Geek the Library’ campaign promotes awareness of library funding issues

WV STATEWIDE. Forty-five West Virginia public libraries—more than half—are participating in Geek the Library, a statewide community-based public awareness campaign coordinated by the West Virginia Library Commission (WVLC) that began in September. The campaign highlights what people are passionate about and how libraries can support them—all in an effort to heighten awareness about the critical funding issues public libraries face.

The West Virginia Library Commission encourages all West Virginia libraries to participate in the campaign, which introduces ‘geek’ as a verb and inspires the public to talk about what they ‘geek,’ whether it’s engineering, superheroes or art. The public awareness campaign illustrates the fact that everyone is passionate about something—everyone ‘geeks’ something—and that the library supports them all.

Doddridge County Public Library Director Cathy Ash organized a successful “Geek the Library” event in West Union, WV on September 20. “At our high school homecoming game, we set up a sign saying, ‘We Geek Football’ with an enlarged picture of the football team.”

“We gave away megaphones with ‘Geek the Library’ stickers on their sides and a bag of cheese puffs stuffed inside each one. We handed out 260 but could have given away many more.” Director Ash and her Geek the Library staff also gave away tee shirts and balloons.

The Geek the Library campaign encourages community involvement. “We placed foam boards on a table where people could write what they geek—chickens, social media, football, cheerleading, crafts, skiing, horses, grandkids, quilting, flower gardening, reading, Sci-Fi, crocheting, zombies, helping the youth, baking pies, and much more.”

The We Geek Football sign is now hanging up in Doddridge County High School, according to Ash. “The boards are now at the library to allow our patrons to sign and tell us what they geek. We are giving them all ‘Geek the Library’ bags with Geek pamphlets, bookmarks and stickers in them.”

A complete list of participating West Virginia libraries is available on the campaign website, <http://geekthelibrary.org/about/libraries.html>.

The campaign’s goal is to start a conversation about library funding and inspire more people to take personal responsibility for keeping their local public libraries vital in their communities;

many people do not know that libraries are at risk or that local funding for libraries is heavily influenced by community members.

The campaign website, www.geekthelibrary.org, provides information about how people can get active and support their local library.

Geek the Library is sponsored by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), a nonprofit library cooperative. The campaign is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The West Virginia Library Commission serves the people of West Virginia and encourages lifelong learning, individual empowerment, civic engagement and an enriched quality of life by enhancing library and information services for all West Virginians. More information is available at www.librarycommission.wv.gov.

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